



3010 Grand Avenue  
Waukegan, IL 60085-2399  
Phone: (847) 377-8000  
Fax: (847) 360-3656

For Immediate Release

Date: October 2, 2003  
Contact: Leslie Piotrowski  
(847) 377-8055  
Marcia Stanek  
(847) 377-8099

**Health Department Sends Message to Women Regarding  
National Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

In connection with National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October), the Lake County Health Department/Community Health Center is calling on women to do three things: get your yearly mammogram beginning with a baseline mammogram at 40 years of age, perform a monthly breast self exam, and go to a healthcare provider once a year for a clinical breast exam.

The most important information women need to know about mammography is that it is the single most powerful tool to detect breast cancer early. Research has shown that routine mammography detects 40 percent of cancers not found on physical examinations or breast self examinations because the cancers were too small to be felt on those exams. Thus, mammography has reduced the death rate from breast cancer by 30 percent. The

-More-

age recommendation for mammography is a baseline mammogram beginning at the age 40 and yearly thereafter. Women are encouraged to ask their doctors or other health care providers about mammography screening.

The importance of yearly clinical breast and monthly self breast examinations should not be minimized. Both of these exams are preventative measures against breast cancer.

Breast self examinations (BSE's) may alert women to any changes in their breasts, but is still not a substitute for mammography screening. The value of BSE's is to help women become familiar with how their breasts normally feel and to notice any changes, such as lumps, discolorations, rashes and nipple discharge.

These preventative measures can help detect breast cancer in its early stages. Far too many women die because they did not find their breast cancer soon enough. In Lake County:

- Between 1999 and 2001, there were 220 deaths due to breast cancer.
- Between 1995 and 1999, there were 1,943 women diagnosed with breast cancer.
- In terms of breast cancer being a health disparity, African American women are more often diagnosed in later stages of breast cancer than white women.

-More-

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Page 3 of 3

The Health Department's Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Project (IBCCP) program offers free breast and cervical cancer screenings to Lake and McHenry County women 50 years of age or older, who are uninsured or underinsured and at low income. For more information, please call IBCCP at (847) 377-8430.

# # #